

Alexandria Visitors Center Analysis

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The Assignment

- The Assignment:
 - Whether New Visitors Center Warranted
 - If So, Where Should It Be Placed?



Information Gathering

- Secondary Research
 - Local / National
- Primary Research
 - Interviews
 - Site Visits
 - Surveys
 - Focus Groups
 - Client Meetings



Findings

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Well-Defined Visitor Domain ■ Access to Large Regional Market ■ Condition of Public Environment ■ Unique Product ■ Alexandria is Attractive to the Cultural & Heritage Tourist ■ Tourist Satisfaction ■ Increasing Realization of the Value Tourism Provides the City 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Signage ■ Parking ■ Visitor and Tourism Data and Research With Respect to Day Trippers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ New Visitors Center ■ Increased Tourism Marketing ■ Support for Tourism ■ Maximize Riverfront Potential ■ Partnerships ■ Partnering with Washington, DC and Mt. Vernon ■ Moving Tourists Beyond Old Town ■ Nurture Relationship with Motor Coach Operators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Conflicts between tourism activities and neighborhoods ■ Change ■ Traffic Congestion ■ Competition From Other Localities ■ Terrorism



Tourism & Economics

- Strong drive market
- Alexandria tourist median income
- Repeat visitors
- Satisfaction rating
- The DC visitor
- Tourism economic impact
- Motor coach impact



Proposed Visitors Center Mission

- Provide a welcoming, pleasing and fun experience designed to encourage visitors:
 - to participate in all aspects of Alexandria;
 - to visit the surrounding area of Old Town, its historic and other attractions, restaurants and shopping;
 - to visit other Alexandria area and attractions outside of primary visitor domain;
 - to stay longer in and return to Alexandria; and
 - to leave as satisfied visitors and goodwill ambassadors for Alexandria.



Proposed Visitor Center Mission

- Provide information, directions, basic visitor amenities, reservations and ticketing, and access to attractions, facilities, hotels, restaurants and entertainment.
- Act as a staging point for walking, trolley and garden tours to reduce idling time and travel time for buses in the area.
- Act as a node or pick-up/drop-off point to encourage the use of mass transit.
- Convince tourists that Alexandria cares and wants to help make their stay an interesting and pleasant one.



Comparables

- Charleston, South Carolina
- Montgomery, Alabama
- Newport, Rhode Island
- Corning, New York
- Easton, Pennsylvania
- Types of Visitors Centers
 - Information centers
 - Information and orientation centers
 - Interpretive centers



Ramsay House Analysis

- History
- Services Offered
- Visitation & Usage
- Transportation
- Traffic & Parking
- Assessment



Site Criteria

- Relationship to tourist domain- King Street/center of Old Town
- Positive and negative impacts on residential and business neighbors
- Easy vehicular access, convenient to parking, public transportation/DASH/shuttle
- Convenience for motor coach tours
- Exterior spaces usable in fair weather for overflow and staging
- Visually accessible and identifiable for pedestrian and car traveler
- Connections and relationships to attractions, lodging, shopping & restaurants
- Public acceptance/acceptability
- Costs
- Operational issues

Locations Considered



POTENTIAL LOCATIONS CONSIDERED

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA
VISITOR CENTER ANALYSIS



Recommendations Common to All

- **Signage & Wayfinding**

- Improvements will help manage traffic & parking, define districts & identity, reinforce the experience, create linkages

- **Public Transportation**

- Encourage special bus passes; Extend DASH ABOUT to weekdays or free off-peak DASH
- King Street signal synchronization & larger pull-offs to clear lane of traffic



Recommendations Common to All

■ Motor Coach Management

- Improve signage, establish designated routes
- Set aside more drop-off on Market Square, identify and mark additional parking and partnerships

■ Parking

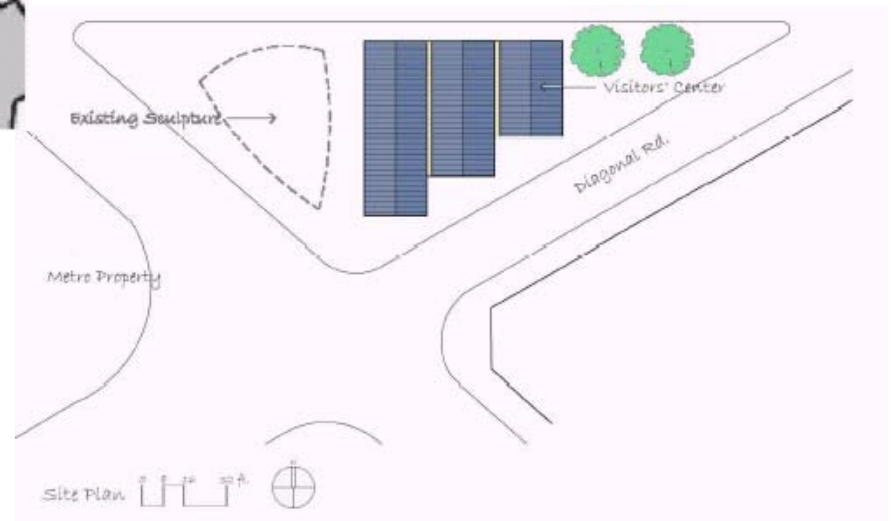
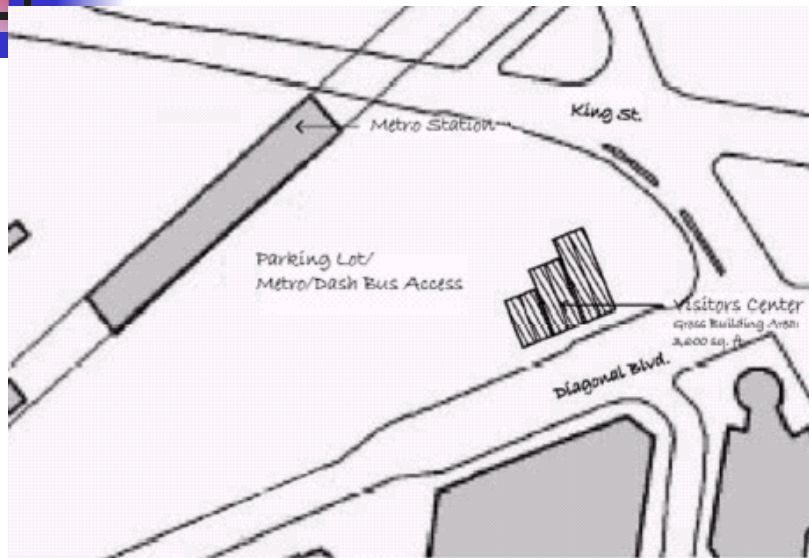
- Develop parking census, review parking regulations & explore discount rate structures



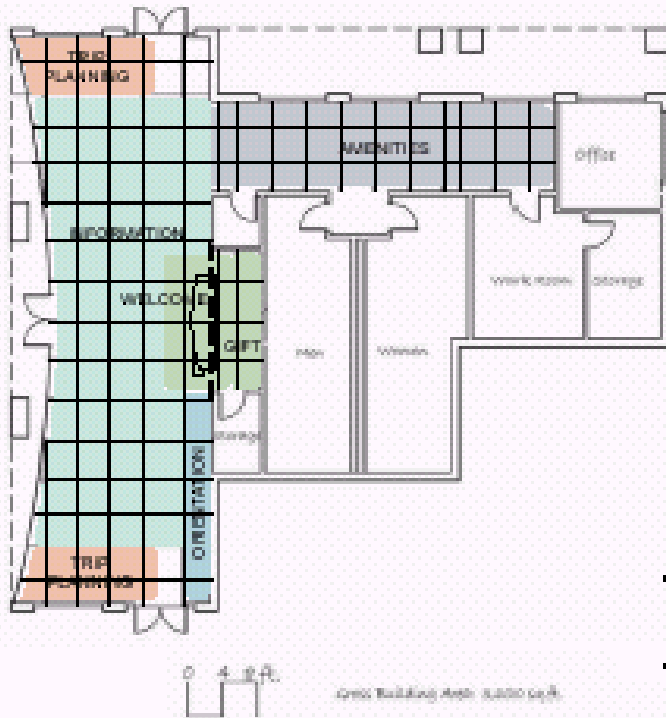
Recommended Site Alternatives

- King Street Metro Station Lot
- King Street Triangle
- King Street Metro Concourse
- Market Square
- Ramsay – Renovation & Expansion
- Ramsay – Status Quo/Renovate+Metro
- Ramsay – Status Quo – Marketing

Upper King Street Site Alternatives



Upper King Street Alternative



Floor Plan



Side Elevation



Front Elevation

Ramsay House Expansion Alternative

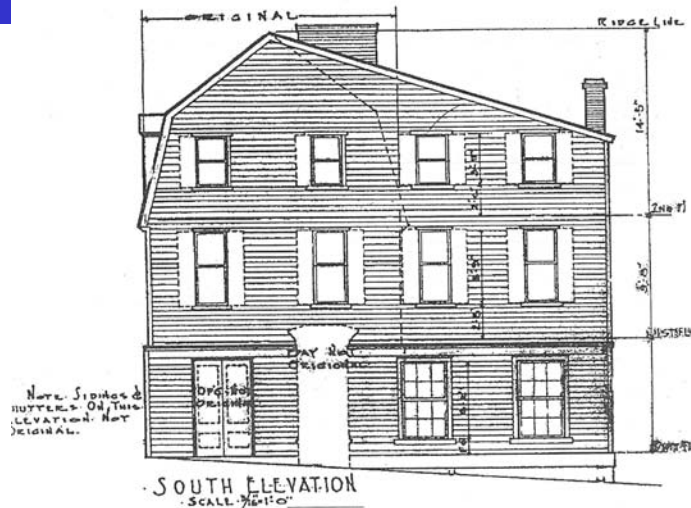
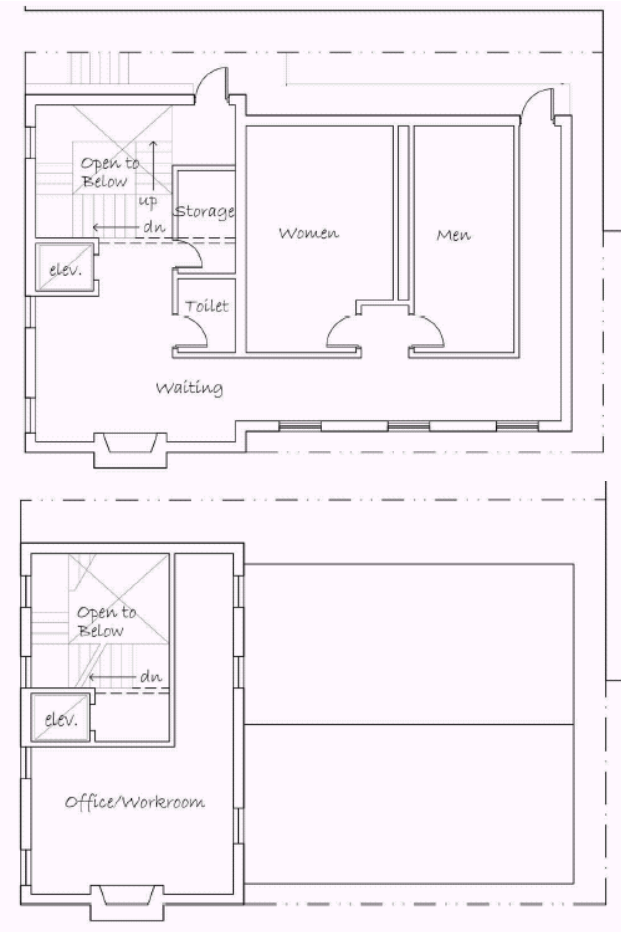
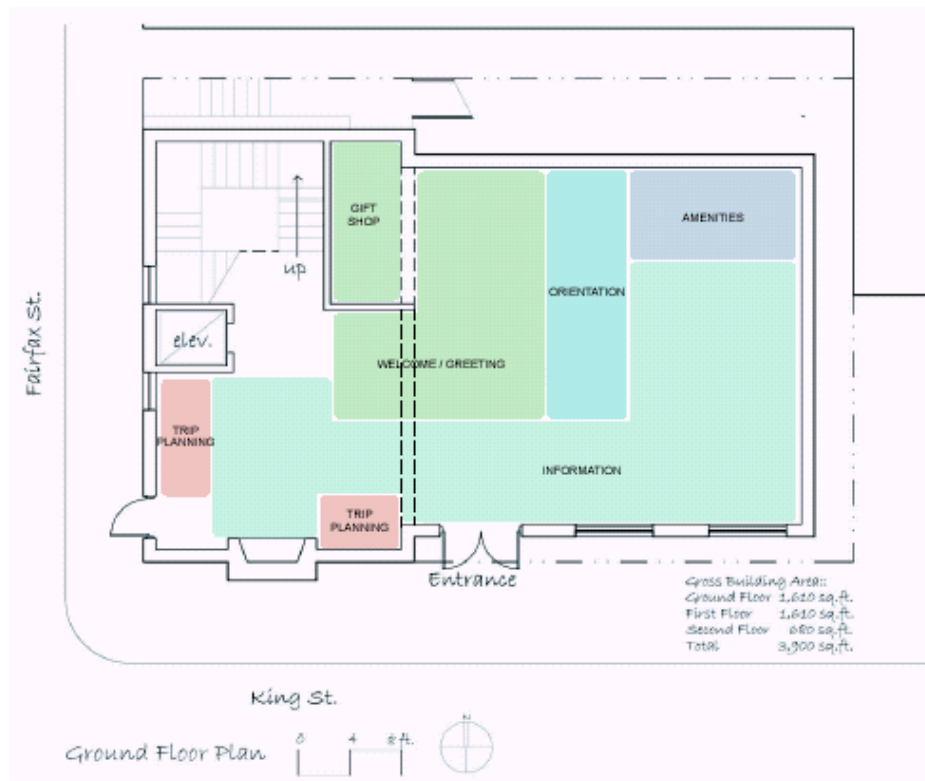


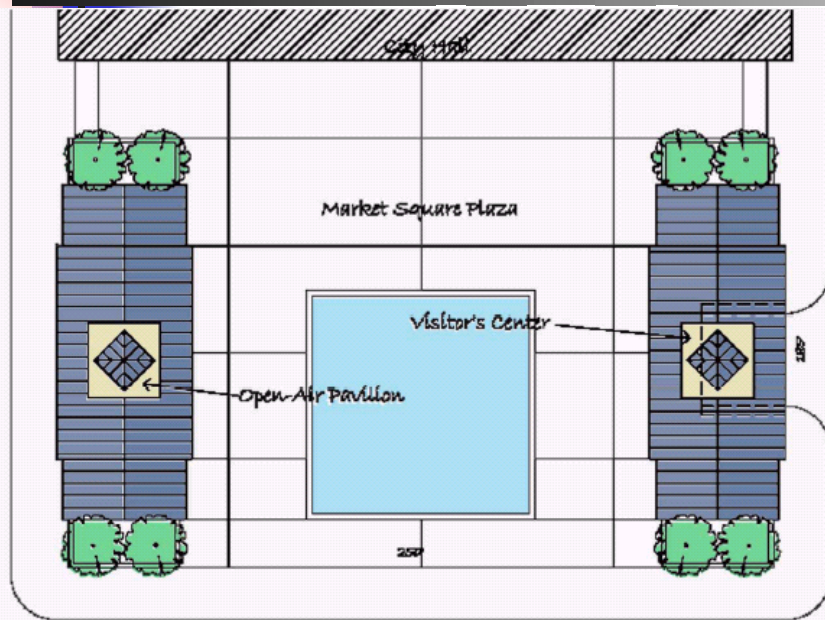
Illustration No. 2-1936 Historic American Building Survey measured drawing of the Ramsay House. The drawing indicates the original configuration of the building. A.A. Biggs, delineator. WPA under the direction of the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Branch of Plans and Designs. Source: Special Collections, Alexandria Library



Ramsay House Expansion Alternative



Market Square Alternative

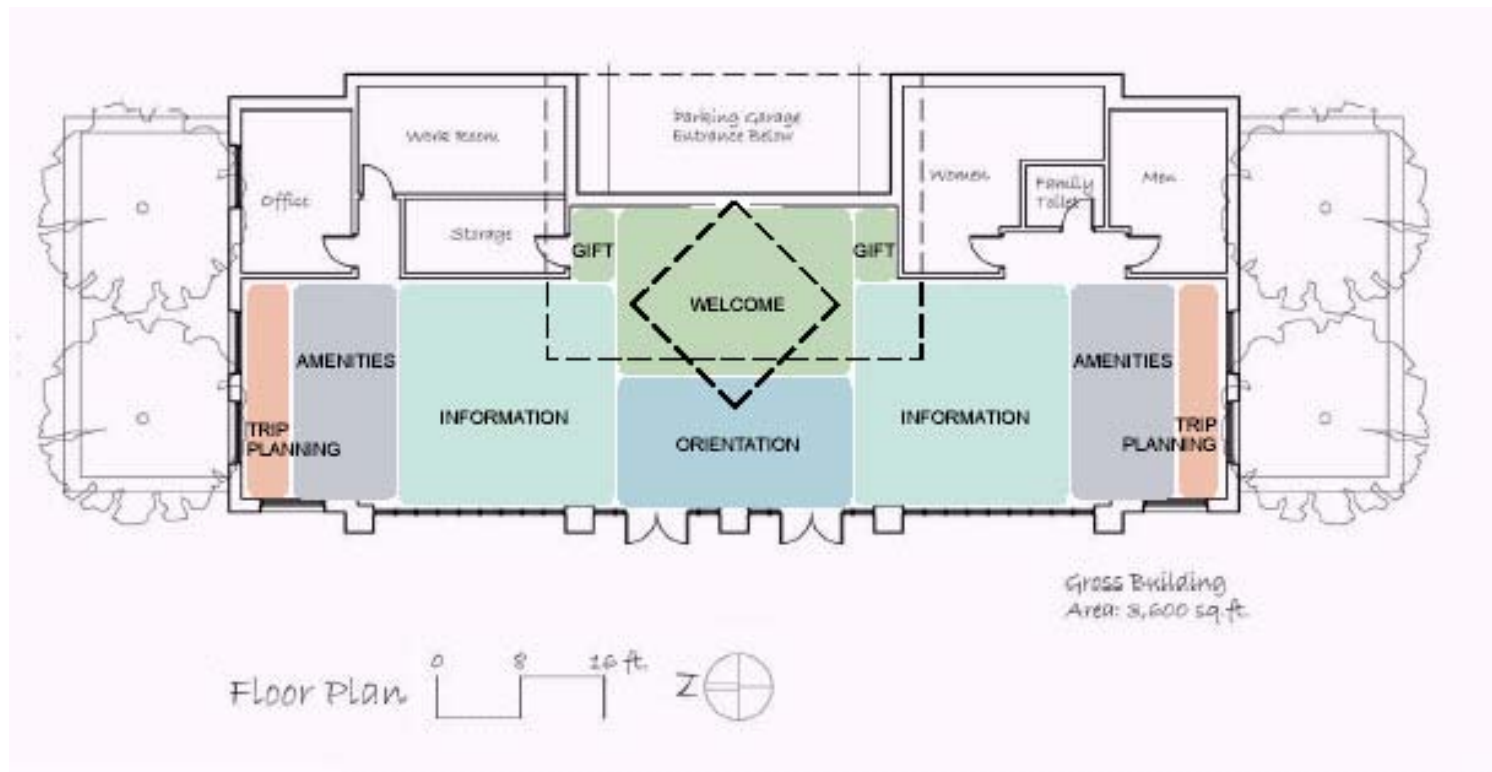


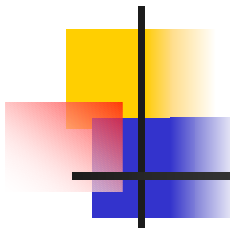
West Elevation 0 8 16 ft.



Site Section 0 8 16 32 ft.

Market Square Alternative





Site Issues/Properties	Ramsay House- Existing	Ramsay House- Expanded	Market Square Pavilion	Metro Station Concourse	Metro Station Lot	King St. Triangle
SITE ISSUES						
Availability	+	+	+	-	-	+
Site Acquisition	+	+	+	-	-	+
Proximity to Attractions	+	+	+	-	-	-
Visibility	+	+	+	-	o	o
Auto Accessibility	o	o	+	+	+	o
Metro Accessibility	-	-	-	+	+	+
Motorcoach Accessibility	o	o	+	+	+	o
Pedestrian Marshalling	o	o	+	o	+	+
Impact on Neighborhood	-	o	+	+	+	+
Size Fit w/ Program	-	-	+	+	+	+
Impact on Site	+	-	+	+	-	-
VISITOR CENTER ISSUES						
Site/Building Ownership	+	+	+	-	-	+
Visitor Experience	-	o	+	o	o	+
Visitor Convenience	+	+	+	-	-	-
Availability of Bus Queuing	o	o	+	o	+	o
Tour Marshalling Space	-	o	+	+	+	+
Impact on Neighborhood	+	+	+	o	o	o
First Cost	o	o	o	o	o	o
Operational Efficiency	-	-	+	+	+	+
ADA Accessibility	-	-	+	+	+	+